THE

Way to Heaven made plain.

LONDON.

Printed by *P. L.* for *W. Thackery* at the *Angel* in *Duck-lane*, 167[illegible].

THE

WAY

TO

Heaven

MADE PLAYN:

By answering the Objections, resolving the Doubts, and removing the stumbling-blocks, which do usually hinder Sinners from seeking after life and happiness.

Together with serious Exhortations, and earnest perswasions to move sinners to turn unto the Lord by true Repentance, and accept of mercy whilst the day of grace Lasteth.

Very useful and profitable for all sorts of PEOPLE.

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AMongst those many Lets and Impediments whereby the generality of Men and Women in the world are hindred from a serious applying of themselves to seek after

life and happiness, I find this one thing to lie as a stumbling-block in the way of a great many: That is to say, *The Diversities*, which by frequent controversies and disputings are so resolutely maintained by men professing godliness, who are of different perswations.

For this very cause, many are apt to reason with themselves after this manner:

There are so many Religions abroad in the World, that a man cannot tell which to chuse; one saith this is the true way, another saith, that's the true way. One saith: *Lo here is Christ*, another saith, *Lo there is Christ*.

Some say the *Episcopal man*, those which stand for the Common Prayer, and other Ceremonies, that they are Gods people: Others say, the *Presbyterians*, are more likely to be the people of God: a third sort say the *Independants* way of worshipping is the right way: a fourth sort say, the *Baptists* way is most agreeable to the word of God; a fifth sort say, the *Quakers*, are

the only People to whom the will of God is known.

Thus so many men' so many minds, and we know not whom to beleive. and therefore we had as good sit still and do nothing as to do something to no purpose: And hereupon they continue to go on in sinful courses: following the desires of their own hearts, and never so much as seek after the knowledge of God, whereby they might come unto his fear, and be happy for ever.

But my friends, let me tell you these things ought not to be: but such consequences will end in desperate and dangerous conclusions For although it were greatly to be wished and desired, that all those that fear the Lord were of *one heart*, and of *one minde*, yet since the Lord in Wisdom is pleased to suffer his people to be some of one minde, and some of another, concerning circumstantial and ceremonial things, for in the fundamentals and essentials of Religion, and in all things that are absolutely necessary for salvation: they do joyntly agree: But seeing I say, God is pleased to permit such as truly fear him, to be of different perswasions con-

cerning things less considerable, this should in no wise discourage us from seeking, but rather stir us up with much more fervency and earnestness to see out the true way, and to finde out what the acceptable will of the Lord is that so by doing the same we may purchase rest and quietness to our *Souls*. And that no one may think their labour herein will be in vain here what the Lord saith, ask and ye shall have. seek and ye shall finde. Here is the word of the holy and true God for thy security, he hath faithfully promised; that if thou dost seek thou shalt find; and again, *Christ* saith, If any man doth the Will of my Father he shall know the Doctrine; that is, wheresoever God sees a willing mind, and that any poor Creature doth truly desire to fear him, and to keep his Commandements then he will reveal to that Soul so much of his will as is needful for its present satisfaction and future happiness.

Now to encourage us farther in the performance of this so necessary and profitable a duty the Lord hath been pleased so far to condiscend to our weak capacities, as that he hath set before our eyes all those

things which are of greateſt concernment, in ſuch plain and legible characters, as he that runs may read them, and not only ſo, but he hath alſo graciouſly promiſed freely to give us what he doth require of us, and to enable us to perform whatever he commands us to do: therefore we have no reaſon to have harſh thoughts concerning God, or to account him a hard Task-Maſter, for the ways of God are pleaſantneſs, and his paths peace. The Yoke of Chriſt is eaſie, and his Burthen light.

Doth God command thee to believe in him? why he will give thee faith whereby thou ſhalt be able to do it; for faith is the gift of God he is both the Author, and the finiſher thereof: doth he bid thee repent? why he will grant thee repentance unto life. he will turn thee, and thou ſhalt be turned, doth he require a new heart? why he hath promiſed to give a new heart, a ſoft and tender heart, ſuch as ſhall bleed for the leaſt prick of Sin: doth he command thee to love him? why he hath ſaid, I will circumciſe thy heart, that thou ſhalt love me with all thy heart, and with all thy ſtrength: doth he command

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thee to fear him? why 'tis his promiſe to put his fear into thy inward parts, and to write his Law in thy heart, and ſo in all other things, 'tis he that works both to will and to do of his own good pleaſure: for we cannot of our ſelves or in our own ſtrength do any thing that is good, but our duty is to wait upon God, for in him we live, move and have our being, he it is that hath created us, 'tis he that cloathes and feeds us, and preſerves our lives: from him alone, we are to expect new ſupplyes of whatſoever is needful for our Being and Well-being in this world and alſo in reference to our future happineſs according as the Prophet *David* ſaid: My freſh ſprings are in thee: the well-ſpring of life flow from God, as Chriſt ſaith: *He that believeth on me, out of his Belly ſhall flow forth Rivers of Living Water; whereof whoſoever drinketh, ſhall live for ever*: God is the fountain of all goodneſs, whatſoever our Souls can deſire, 'tis to be found in him, and he communicates out of his fulneſs unto the neceſſities of poor creatures, but it is through Chriſt, for he is Gods treaſury and ſtore-houſe. It hath pleaſed the Father that in him ſhould all full-

fulneſs dwel, he receives of his Father, and gives to us all things requiſite and neceſſary, both for Soul and Body: he it is that of God is made unto us wiſdom, righteouſneſs, ſanctification and redemption; by him we have acceſs with boldneſs unto the Throne of Grace, and all the petitions we put up to the Father in his name, believing on him we ſhall be heard therein, and our requeſts ſhall be granted: ſo far as it ſhall be for Gods glory and our good. Chriſt is that new & living way in which God will meet with us and bleſs us, and cauſe his face to ſhine upon us, by the light of whoſe countenance, our hearts are made more glad then in the time when Corn and Wine, and Oyl encreaſed: Oh! therefore let every one ſtrive to get an intereſt in Chriſt who alone is worth more then all the world beſide, he is the true Riches that will make us happy to all eternity: he hath purchaſed ſalvation for all that will forſake their ſins, and come and accept of his free tender of Grace for all that will lay down thoſe weapons, wherwith they have been taking Sathans part, and fighting againſt God, if they will now lay hold upon his mercy, and upon his ſtrength

ſtrength. and are willing to be reconciled to God, they ſhall be received into his favour: for whoſoever cometh unto me, ſaith Chriſt, ſhall in no wiſe be caſt out; for God ſo loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whoſoever believed on him ſhould not periſh, but have everlaſting life, *John* 3. 15. 19. It was Gods purpoſe in ſending his Son, and Chriſts deſign in coming into the World, that poor loſt ſinners ſhould be reſtored to that eſtate of happineſs, which they had loſt in the fall, and from this free proffer of grace none are exempted, for God hath made an open Proclamation. *Ho every one that thirſteth, come to the waters, and ye that have no money, come buy Wine, and Milk, without money and without price*, as in the of *Iſaiah*, So in the *Revelations* the Spirit and the Bride ſaid. *Come, and whoſoever will let him come and drink of the water of life freely.* Here we ſee that all are invited to come to Chriſt, from the higheſt to the loweſt, and if we will not, the fault is our own God hath done his part in ſending Chriſt to dye for us and in laying upon him the iniquities of us all: and Chriſt hath done his part in perform-

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ing the Law for us, and in undergoing the wrath of God, and the Curse of the Law, which was due to our sins: and the spirit hath revealed the same unto us, and is often knocking at the Doors of our hearts, and calling us to repentance, but if notwithstanding all this we will fully persist in evil, and refuse to hearken to the voice of God, but hearden our hearts, and make light of Christ, then it will be just with God, to leave us to our selves, and let us perish in our own doings, which the Lord is unwilling to do, for as the Apostle *Peter*, saith, *He would fain have all men to be saved, and come to the knowledge of the truth; he desireth not the death of a sinner, but rather that he would return from his wickedness and live.* But man is of such a perverse and stubborn disposition, that he will not accept of mercy upon Gods terms although never so reasonable.

The great Controversie betwixt God and Man, is about the Will, God would have his Will, and Man would have his will: as Christ saith: *Ye will not come to me that you might have Life*: They will not their will,

will is that which hinders them of injoying God and in him life and happiness: And in another place, *How would I have gathered you together as a Hen gathereth her Chickens under her wings, but ye would not.*

Men are obstinate, and perverse, and will oppose the Holy and good will of God, though it proves their own Ruine in the end, but the folly and madness, and desperate wickedness that lodgeth in the hearts of Sinners that will rather go to Hell by following the desires of their own wills, then to Heaven by obeying the will of God which is holy and righteous, and is made known unto us for our good: God might as well be glorified in our Destruction, as in our Salvation, but he pitties our condition, and is pleased so far to condiscend as to entreat and beseech us to consider our latter end: and whilst he gives us life, and means of repentance to come in and be reconciled unto him, 'tis we that are enemies to God, God never was an enemy to us yet he first seeks us before we seek him: O the Depth of Gods love: O the riches of his grace,

grace, his long ſuffering and kindneſs towards vile ſinful Creatures: Let this goodneſs of God lead thee to repentance, for the long ſuffering of God bringeth ſalvation, as the Apoſtle *Peter* ſaith: *O therefore rent your hearts and not your garments, turn to the Lord for he gracious.*

Why ſhould any ſinner ſtand off: doth the multitude of thy ſins affright thee? why Gods mercies are infinite, he can blot out thy tranſgreſſions, though never ſo many: he will abundantly pardon this is a faithful ſaying, ſaith *Paul*, and worthy of all acceptation, *Jeſus Chriſt came into the world to ſave ſinners, of whom I am cheif.* If thou be the cheif of Sinners, thou art but ſuch a one as Chriſt came to ſave, doſt thou queſtion whether Chriſt can ſave thee? why the Apoſtle tells thee, He is able to ſave to the utmoſt all that come to the father by him doſt thou want faith? go and ſay: *Lord I believe, Lord help my unbelief.* Doſt thou want wiſdom? ask of God who gives liberally and upbraideth not: wouldſt thou truly repent thee of thy Sins, and yet findeſt little ſtrength to do it? ſay unto the Lord, *Turn thou me, and*

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I shall be turned, create in me a clean heart O God, and renew a right Spirit within me.

Thus in every thing make thy requests known to God, by prayer and supplication, and he will help thee: Oh my friends the night is far spent, the day is at hand, let us therefore put off the works of darkness, and put on the Armour of light, and let every one be exorted even in this day, to work out their Salvation, with fear and trembling and to further us therein it is necessary, that we should wait upon God, in his ordinances. O do not make slight of using the means which God hath appointed for your good, make conscience of hearing the word preached, for it is the power of God unto salvation, to every one that believes, let us not then be careless in this so necessary and profitable a duty, for how shall we escape if we neglect so great Salvation? Consider what the Lord hath said; *Hear and your Souls shall live.* Would you have life upon easier terms? Methinks this loving invitation of the Lords should work upon your spirits to be obedient to his word.

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O therefore come and wait upon God in this Ordinance, for it is of Gods appointment, and while thou art a hearing, thou art in Gods way If the five foolish Virgins had been in the way, they might have gon into the wedding as well as the other: but they were out of the way, they were gone to buy when it was too late: If ever you think or desire to go to Heaven, keep in Gods way: now if thou beest at an Alehouse, or walking in the Fields, or idle at home, or in thy bed, when thou shouldst be at Church: this out of Gods way: but if thou keepest in the way, and continuest in well doing, thou shalt not loose thy labour, but God will fulfil his promise, for he hath said: *Ask and ye shall have, seek and ye shall find, knock and it shall be opened to you.*

If thou hast not what thou wouldst have at present, yet wait, as the man did at the Pool of *Bethsaida*: though it was many years, yet at length Christ came to cure him.

Now that all of us may know how to use this means in a hopeful way of success, to bring about this new end of glorifieing God an save our Souls, let us take heed:

First, That we do not hear the Word barely out of Custome, as to say: *I will go to Church because my Neighbours go, or because I cannot open my shop to day, and know not how to spend my time otherwise*: O let us not do thus, but let us go to hear the word preached out of conscience, as them that go to seek for salvation, not making light of it as if it were an indifferent thing, when soul and eternity are therein concerned, either a Heaven full of joye, or a Hell full of woe, but let us go out of meer love to the word, and wait at wisdoms gate, seek diligently as for silver and search as for hidden treasure, and that is the way to attain to it: But then,

Secondly, Pray to God for his power upon the means it is not bear hearing will do it, we may hare and be little the better if we do not pray to God for his blessing, we must hear and pray, and pray and hear, how sweet was the word of God unto *David*? sweeter then the Honey or the Honey comb, as himself saith: *The Commandments of God were of more esteem with him, than all the treasures of Gold and Silver in th· world*. And why was that? Because he meditated in the Law of God day and night,

night, he was continually praying to God, morning and evening, and at midnight, he rose early to call upon the Lord, and he found the benefit of it, as is expresst at large in the book of the *Psalms*, therefore let prayer and meditation accompany our hearing: But then,

Thirdly, We must yield unto all convictions, when ever the word of God doth convince of sin, when he doth Alarum us to come in, let us take heed that we stand it not out, when it comes to a drunkard, and saith: *Thou canst not go to Heaven*: Then hearken to this and leave thy drunkenness, and when it Alarums the swearer or proud person, or covetous, or unclean person, or whomsoever, when it strikes thee upon the heart and saith; *Thou art the man*: O then fall down and say as *Saul* did: *Lord what wilt thou have me to do?* Whatever the sin be that God convince thee of, though it be as dear to thee as thy right eye, or thy right hand, yet pluck it out, or cut it off, and cast it from thee, and that is the way to procure Gods blessing upon the means, so that it shall accomplish the end for which it is appointed. But if thou art unwilling to forsake thy

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ſins and to part with thy luſts, and yet ſtill hopeſt to find mercy in the end, and to be ſaved by Chriſt: Let me beſeech thee to put ſuch thoughts far from thy heart, and let not the Devil any longer delude thee therewith, leſt thou miſerably deceive thy own Soul, for he that hideth his ſins ſhall not proſper; 'tis only he that confeſſeth and forſaketh them who ſhall find mercy: Chriſt did not come to ſave thee in thy ſins, but from thy ſins: if he be thy Prieſt to ſave thee, he will alſo be thy King to rule and govern thee: thou muſt no longer live to thy ſelf but to him that dyed for thee, he hath bought thee with a price, he hath paid thy ranſome, he hath ſhed his pretious blood to redeem thee, and thou art to obey him, and to do whatever he commands thee to do, thou muſt part with thy old companions, I mean thy darling ſins, and boſome luſts, which thou haſt took ſuch pleaſure in, and now thou muſt walk in newneſs of life, for if any man be in Chriſt he is a new Creature old things are paſſed away, behold all things are become new, though heretofore thou walkeſt after the fleſh, yet now thou muſt mortifie the deeds of the fleſh, and ſerve

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the Lord with thy ſpirit and truth, ſo ſin ſhall not have dominion over thee: but thou being ſet at liberty by Chriſt, ſhalt through his might and power get the victory over Satan, Sin and Death, and at length reign in glory with God to all Eternity, which the Lord of his Mercy grant unto us all, for Jeſus Chriſt his ſake.

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